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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

SEP - 7 2017

Mr. Mike Celata, Regional Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico Region
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70123

Mr. Lars Herbst, Regional Director
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
Gulf of Mexico Region
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70123

Ms. Mary Walker, Director
NPDES Water Protection Division
US Environmental Protection Agency Region 4
61 Forsyth Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

Ms. Beverly H. Banister, Director
Air, Pesticides, and Toxics Management Division
US Environmental Protection Agency Region 4
61 Forsyth Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

Mr. William Honker, Director
Water Division
US Environmental Protection Agency Region 6
1445 Ross Ave, Suite 1200
Dallas, Texas 75202

RE: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Safety and Environmental
Enforcement Gulf of Mexico Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation [PCTS# SER-
2013-10557]

Dear Mr. Celata, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Walker, Ms. Banister, and Mr. Honker:

This letter is to notify you of our understanding of your involvement with the formal consultation pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.) as part of the ongoing consultation with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and the U.S.



Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico. This is also to notify you of the transfer of the lead for this consultation from NMFS' Southeast Regional Office located in St. Petersburg, Florida to NMFS' Office of Protected Resources ESA Interagency Cooperation Division located in Silver Spring, Maryland effective upon the receipt of this letter.

For this ESA section 7 consultation, BOEM is the lead action agency and BSEE and USEPA are co-federal action agencies. Under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, BOEM and BSEE are jointly charged with the management of developing outer continental shelf energy resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way, while promoting safety and conservation through vigorous oversight and enforcement. The USEPA is charged under the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act to permit the water and air discharges that are associated with oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico, with the exception of air quality for areas west of 87.5° W longitude being screened under BOEM jurisdiction.

As part of the same ESA section 7 consultation, the NMFS Office of Protected Resources Interagency Cooperation Division will be consulting on the NMFS Permits and Conservation Division's action for the promulgation of regulations and subsequent issuance of letters of authorization (LOAs). LOA applications will be submitted by individual oil and gas industry operators in accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act for take of marine mammals incidental to oil and gas activities under BOEM and BSEE jurisdiction for the five year period after the date of issuance of the rule.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ESA section 7 consulting biologist, Allison Hernandez at 301-427-8413 or allison.hernandez@noaa.gov, or me at 301-427-8495 cathy.tortorici@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



Cathryn E. Tortorici
Chief, ESA Interagency Cooperation Division
Office of Protected Resources

cc: Tre Glenn, BOEM
Tamara Arzt, BOEM
Jill Lewandowski, BOEM
Stephanie Gambino, BOEM
Arie Kaller, BOEM
Deborah Epperson, BSEE
Isaac Chen, EPA
Brent Larsen, EPA
Tina Alvarado, EPA